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Committee on Conferences
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Agenda and programme of work for 2007

The agenda for the substantive session of 2007 of the Committee on Conferences was approved by the Committee at its organizational session, on 12 April 2007, on the basis of a draft agenda proposed by the Secretariat in document A/AC.172/2007/L.1. The approved agenda for the substantive session of 2007 is accordingly issued in the present document, together with annotations regarding the documentation, for the Committee's consideration in 2007. Information concerning the reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, the utilization of conference services and other matters, regularly reported under the agenda item "Pattern of conferences", will again be included in one comprehensive report.

Agenda for the substantive session of 2007

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
2. Calendar of conferences and meetings:
   (a) Requests for exceptions to section I, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243;
   (b) Adoption of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2008-2009;
   (c) Consideration of the draft provisional calendar of conferences and meetings for 2008 and 2009 in the economic, social and related fields.
3. Meetings management/improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities:
   (a) Intersessional departures for 2007 and related matters;
   (b) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs, and consultations with/letters to bodies concerning utilization of the conference services available to them;

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(c) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States;

(d) Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi;

(e) Improved utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa.

4. Impact on meetings held at Headquarters during the implementation of the capital master plan, Strategy IV (phased approach).

5. Integrated global management/results of the work of the task forces and follow-up on their recommendations.

6. Translation- and interpretation-related matters.

7. Documentation and publication-related matters.

8. Organization of work.

9. Adoption of the report.

Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

2. Calendar of conferences and meetings

(a) Requests for exceptions to section 1, paragraph 7, of General Assembly resolution 40/243

In paragraph 15 of its resolution 47/202 A, the General Assembly demanded that all subsidiary organs of the Assembly comply with the provisions of section I, paragraph 7, of its resolution 40/243, in which it had decided that no subsidiary organ of the Assembly would meet at United Nations Headquarters during a regular session of the Assembly unless explicitly authorized by the Assembly.

In accordance with the procedure established by the Committee at its 1986 session and reaffirmed at its 1992 session, chairpersons of subsidiary organs of the General Assembly that wish to meet at Headquarters during the main part of the Assembly submit their requests to the Chairperson of the Committee.

(b) Adoption of the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2008-2009

A draft biennial calendar for 2008-2009 will be submitted by the Secretariat to the Committee on Conferences at its substantive session of 2007.

The Committee will submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings for 2008-2009.

(c) Consideration of the draft provisional calendar of conferences and meetings for 2008 and 2009 in the economic, social and related fields

In its decision 1998/103, the Economic and Social Council decided to invite the Committee to review the draft biennial calendar of conferences and meetings of the

Council and to submit, as appropriate, its recommendations thereon to the Council. The draft calendar for the biennium 2008-2009, which is to be presented to the Council at its substantive session of 2007, is expected to be available for consideration by the Committee before the substantive session of the Council. The Committee will therefore have the opportunity to review the draft and convey its observations to the Council.

3. Meetings management/improved utilization of conference-servicing resources and facilities

(a) Intersessional departures for 2007 and related matters

A compilation of such matters will be provided for inclusion in the report of the Committee.

(b) Meeting statistics of United Nations organs, and consultations with/letters to bodies concerning utilization of the conference services available to them

In section II.A, paragraph 3, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly welcomed the steps taken by those bodies that had adjusted their programme of work in order to achieve the optimum utilization of conference-servicing resources and requested the Committee on Conferences to continue consultations with the secretariats and bureaux of bodies that underutilized their conference-servicing resources.

(c) Provision of interpretation services to meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States

In section II.A, paragraph 4, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly recognized the importance of meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States for the smooth functioning of the sessions of intergovernmental bodies and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that, as far as possible, all requests for conference services for the meetings of regional and other major groupings of Member States were met. In paragraph 5, it noted with concern the difficulties experienced by Member States owing to the lack of conference services for some of those meetings. In paragraph 6, it also noted with concern that, although the percentage of meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States that were provided with interpretation services in the four main duty stations in 2005 had increased to 87 per cent, as compared with 85 per cent in 2004, the figure was still below the 98 per cent provided with services from May 2001 to April 2002, 92 per cent from May 2002 to April 2003 and 90 per cent from May 2003 to April 2004.

In paragraph 7, the General Assembly recalled that meetings held by regional and other major groupings of Member States had so far been provided with interpretation services on an ad hoc basis, in accordance with established practice, and requested the Secretary-General to continue to explore innovative ways to address that problem and to report thereon to the Assembly through the Committee on Conferences. In paragraph 8, the Assembly once again urged intergovernmental bodies to take into account and make provision for such meetings in their programmes of work.

(d) Improved utilization of conference facilities at the United Nations Office at Nairobi

In section II.A, paragraph 9, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with several Assembly resolutions, including resolution 60/236 B, section II.A, paragraph 10, all meetings of Nairobi-based United Nations bodies had taken place in Nairobi in 2005, but reiterated the need for vigilance in that respect, and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-second session through the Committee on Conferences.

(e) Improved utilization of the conference centre at the Economic Commission for Africa

In section II.A, paragraph 10, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly welcomed the fact that international and local corporations and academic institutions were being allowed to host events at the Economic Commission for Africa conference centre after screening, on a case-by-case basis, by the United Nations Security and Safety Service to ensure compliance with the United Nations headquarters minimum security standards, which was likely to contribute to increasing the utilization of the centre. In paragraph 11 of the same resolution, the Assembly welcomed the efforts undertaken to increase utilization of the conference facilities at the centre and to align the methodology used to compile utilization statistics with that of Conference Services at the four main duty stations, including building on the cooperative agreement the Commission had established with the Division of Conference Services at the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

In paragraph 12 of the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue efforts to ensure that the Economic Commission for Africa strengthened linkages with other centres and bodies, and, in paragraph 13, it requested him to continue to explore means to increase the utilization of the conference centre of the Commission, bearing in mind the headquarters minimum operating security standards, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its sixty-second session through the Committee on Conferences.

4. Impact on meetings held at Headquarters during the implementation of the capital master plan, strategy IV (phased approach)

In its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly requested the Committee on Conferences to keep this matter under constant review, and asked the Secretary-General to report regularly to the Committee on matters pertaining to the calendar of conferences and meetings of the United Nations during the construction phase.

5. Integrated global management/results of the work of the task forces and follow-up on their recommendations

In section III, paragraph 6, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly recalled section II.B, paragraph 4, of its resolution 60/236 B, in which it had requested the Secretary-General to ensure that measures taken by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management to seek the evaluation by Member States of the quality of the conference services provided to them as a key performance indicator of the Department provided equal opportunities to Member States to present their evaluation in the six official languages of the United Nations and were in full compliance with relevant resolutions of the Assembly, and requested the

Secretary-General to report to the Assembly, through the Committee on Conferences, on progress made in that regard.

In paragraph 7, the General Assembly also recalled section II.B, paragraph 6, of its resolution 60/236 B and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its sixty-second session, through the Committee on Conferences, on both the results of the work of the task forces and the outcome of the ongoing consultations among United Nations duty stations on a follow-up to the recommendations of the task forces. Furthermore, in paragraph 8, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to keep the Assembly apprised of progress made in integrated global management.

6. Translation- and interpretation-related matters

In section V, paragraph 7, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly noted the proposal on workload standards to develop a comprehensive methodology for performance measurement and management from a full-system perspective and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly periodically, starting at its sixty-second session, on the specific indicators proposed under the headings of timeliness, quality, financial performance and organizational learning and growth.

In section V, paragraph 9, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly noted with concern the high reliance on freelance interpretation at the United Nations Office at Vienna and requested the Secretary-General to report on any inconsistency in quality of interpretation services related thereto, including at other duty stations, and on measures to address that issue, if needed, to the Assembly at its sixty-second session through the Committee on Conferences.

In section V, paragraph 11, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly noted the Secretary-General's plans to address the issue of succession planning by enhancing internal and external training programmes, developing staff exchange programmes between organizations and participating in outreach activities to institutions that trained language staff for international organizations. In paragraph 12, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to hold competitive examinations for the recruitment of language staff sufficiently in advance so as to fill current and future vacancies in language services in a timely manner, bearing in mind the persistent situation at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, and to inform the Assembly at its sixty-second session of efforts in that regard.

7. Documentation and publication-related matters

In section IV, paragraph 4, of its resolution 61/236, the General Assembly noted with concern the continued high level of late submissions of documentation by author departments, which, in turn, had a negative impact on the functioning of intergovernmental bodies, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly, at its sixty-second session, through the Committee on Conferences, on impediments, if any, to achieving full compliance with the 10-week and 6-week rules for the issuance of pre-session documents, including, where appropriate, proposed measures to address such impediments.

In paragraph 5, the General Assembly welcomed the new accountability mechanism set up in the Secretariat for the submission, processing and issuance of documentation, and requested the Secretary-General to report thereon to the

Committee on Conferences for its further consideration and analysis, in order to provide concrete recommendations to the Assembly at its sixty-second session.

8. Organization of work

In section II.A, paragraph 20, of its resolution 57/283 B, the General Assembly encouraged the Committee on Conferences to keep under continued review the procedures for the participation of observers in the work of the Committee.

9. Adoption of the report